



Outlaw



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Chapter 1 by Andrew Hartmann

My name is Jed Walker, and I'm gonna to tell you a story about how a dirty outlaw like me can become a small town hero. It all started back in 1870 in Texas, I was the baddest outlaw in miles. The rangers didn't have anything on me. My horse could outrun any of theirs any day. I got on with my life by robbing banks and trains.

Life was going fine until this new group of outlaws came riding into town on their horses. They said that they ruled the town now. The public's reaction was to just hide in their homes. They didn't really bother me much, then it all changed when the sheriff came and asked me for help.

Chapter 2 by R



Sheriff Rogers was a good man, better than most. I was a criminal and I had bribed officials in my time, but that town was under his protection. I knew that, but these newcomers hadn't quite gotten the memo.

"I need a deputy." He said, skipping the formalities and starting with business. I sighed a tad overdramatically, letting the sack of money I was holding drop to the floor.

Oh, yeah, he was in the middle of arresting me for robbery when he came asking for help. May have forgot to mention that...

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"Is this really the time?" I asked. He looked at me for a moment, then he said, "Rogers was a careful shot, but the thing made me antsy. He didn't budge."

"There's no one around." He said bluntly. "Take off the mask, tidy up, no one would be able to tell."

"I'm not exactly the prime candidate for a lawman." I replied. "Who even put you on this idea, Sheriff?"

"The good Mrs. Barnes." He told me, which made sense. The widow of his former deputy would be a source he'd trust, and a former crook like her would drag him to me clear as day.

"What does the lovely Mrs. Barnes tell you about me?" I ask him. Sure I'd love to help him, the Sheriff was a good man, even if that did lend me a tad bit of trouble now and then.

"That you're a good rider, a better shot, and are brave enough to stand by my side and fight them. Is she right?"

"I'm an outlaw, Sheriff, not you're deputy." I snort. "But she's right enough. It'd cost you, though."

"How about we start with me not arresting you, does that sound fair?" Rogers replied smoothly and I had to grin at that. Any day where I'm not getting shot at or arrested is a good one, after all.

Chapter 3 by Chris



In Mrs. Barnes' parlor we sat. The room was filled with trinkets, most of 'em stolen I'd venture. My mind smirked as I scanned the walls of pilfered property. A less pleasant sensation came over me as I noticed a red-stained grey uniform. A rather grim display courtesy of her late husband. That one, at least, was earned.

Half-startling me out of my thoughts, the good Mrs. Barnes set in front of me a glass of whiskey with a wink. She gave the sheriff a glass of milk: wink-less, I noticed. The old man sniffed and snorted at it. Then he gulped it all down. I followed suit with my whiskey, sensing a kind of challenge in it.

"So where do we start then?" he asked. A point which he had grown weary of the silence.

"I don't know, I ain't the lawman."

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There is something pathological about the kind of men who become outlaws. His type never deviate from the straight path. At least us criminals don't always commit crimes.

Annoyed, the sheriff drew a long, sharp breath. Then, exhaling, he retorted: "we ain't goin' after lawmen now are we?"

Mrs. Barnes jumped in, "perhaps you've heard about the government coach comes near town every now and again? Nice and fat they say."

Of course I had heard. I considered taking on that prize myself; dangerous business though. "If I were these outlaws I'd consider laying a trap for the coach and then, hell, these boys could retire," I said.

"There it is then," replied the sheriff. "We ambush the ambushers."

Chapter 4 by MudCat



"Just ambush the ambushers." I smirked.

"You have a better idea?" Rogers ask starring at me like I had just slapped his momma.

"First of all there's at least a dozen of them and only two of us. We're out manned and out gunned. With you sucking down that cow juice, I seriously doubt that you're going to be much help either."

I knew Rogers had problems with his gut. He had taken a bullet about four years earlier. I knew because I had given it to him.

"Well then mister , what do you suggest we do?"

"We have to thin the heard a little."

Chapter 5 by Rix Quill



Mrs Barnes kindly topped up my whiskey glass and in return I whacked her bottom somewhat. Now it was me who gave her the wink. She smiled back. "I like the idea of ambushin' those dozen

varmints," she said. "My late husband Quill would've liked it too."

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"I don't think it'll work, Doris," said Rogers. "We're only two of us agin 12 rifles. We'd be bound-dogs in a turkey sh

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I said, "What we could do is get all those namby-pamby, yeller-belied townsfolk diggin' a big hole in Main Street, lined at the base with pointed steaks, all then covered up to disguise the pit. Lure Oswald and his cronies into the pit and, hey-presto, no more outlaws."

Rogers drew his eyebrows closer together as he pondered over my suggestion. "That's a mighty fine plan there, Walker, but how do we keep Oswald away while the pit is bein' dug?"

"We coincide it with the stage coach arrival. Oswald won't let all that gold slip through his grubby claws and he'll probably spring it by Old Ma Johnson's Creek – 'bout twenty miles out of town."

Mrs Brown looked at me from the bottom of her stairs and waved the whiskey bottle. "Come up when you're ready, Jed . . . and I'll see you tonight, Sheriff."

No doubt about it - he was a good man.

Chapter 6 by Sharky Playz



god

Chapter 7 by Brian Miller



God couldn't help us now.

Our plan didn't work. One of the pit diggers gave our plan away to one of the Outlaws, who brought the news back to Oswald.

We were covering the pit up and blending it in with the ground when our lookout came to us with word of the Stage Coach and Oswald's gang hot on it's tail.

"Goat-screwing snake herders," I declared them. " Let's move it. The pit is useless. Come on

Sheriff. Only we can stop these willy-nilly sunsabit chies."

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"You are darn rootin'-tootin'! That's right, Sheriff. Only we can stop these willy-nilly sunsabit chies. Sheriff Rogers led the way as we rode out of Town and

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I had a lever rifle, and once I got a steady bead on one of Oswald's Outlaws, I would peck them off. I took two down, the ones who had gotten atop the Coach, before the group began to fire at us.

Sheriff Rogers was a damn fine shot with his six-shooter .31, and he picked off at least two more Outlaws before his horse took a hit and he went down in the middle of the road. I kept riding on.

I got another Outlaw bastard with my rifle before putting it away and drawing my six-shooter .44, which I was a far better shot. I dropped two more Outlaws before I was knocked off my horse by one Outlaw who had gotten on the Coach. He kicked me in the face after I shot one of his comrades.

I hit the ground hard, and rolled away from the road. The Outlaws riding behind the Coach passed me and I popped up, my gun cocked. I took aim and fired twice, taking two more Outlaws from the pack.

I whistled for my horse, which came galloping back to me. I hopped on and began to chase the Outlaws, and Oswald.

They raced away from me. I watched as the rest of them boarded the Coach. I heard a few gunshots and watched as they tossed the driver and other occupants guarding the valuables out into the road, where their dead bodies fell and rolled away into the brush.

I tried like hell to catch up. I could see Sheriff Rogers was standing his ground ahead on the road. He had his .31 up high, ready to shoot. I saw the gunfire and heard it, but I don't know if Sheriff Rogers got any more of those bastards.

I watched as they gunned him down and let the horses trample over him. The wheels did their own part, leaving Sheriff Rogers nearly unidentifiable.

I halted my horse by him and dismounted. I got beside him, hanging on to the idea that he would be fine knowing he wasn't. I had seen men take worse beatings and live, but Sheriff Rogers was

old. And his body was too far gone for help. He was done.

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'You stupid old man, God no, I can't help you now. You need to get up and her whiskey and open bed can help us now.

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"Because, it's the right thing to do." He croaked out. "Even you know, right from wrong." He handed me something with his final words. "Finish this."

He handed me his Sheriff's badge. I had been brought here as a trade for not being arrested. But now the Sheriff who arrested me was dead, and I was a free man. I didn't need to carry on and fight Oswald and his outlaws.

But I had to at the same time. It was personal now. I had to carry out this man's final act as Sheriff. I had to stop Oswald, or put him down like the dog he was.

I mounted my horse and gave chase. It was time to end this. I would catch Oswald and save the Coach, and rid the town of the Outlaw pests.

Chapter 8 by Brian Miller



It came down to me and Oswald. Like I said, I'm the baddest Outlaw for miles around. Oswald was an outsider, and now that he had crossed me, he knew who he was against.

I had cut down more than half of his crew. But he had gotten what he came for. The Stage Coach was his. If he was anywhere as ruthless as me, I actually did him a favor. His yield had less to divide across now.

As I pursued him, his Outlaws fired back at me, wounding my horse and sending me to the ground. I threw out the shoulder of my shooting arm when I hit the ground.

I think that might have evened the odds.

I had to track the Stage Coach across hours of open desert. I eventually tracked Oswald and his gang down to a small quarry that leached off the edge of the desert.

It was High Dusk as I looked down from the rock face I took cover behind to watch the Outlaws, and I hollered down into the quarry, "Oswald Parker!"

The entirety of his gang looked up at me. There were four of them, excluding Oswald himself. Oswald came out clearly. He was wearing a slick under-toned black shirt and pants, with rattlesnake boots.

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"What can I do for you?" He said back.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Well, I imagine your the law. Come to arrest me." He laughed. His cronies did too.

"My name is Jed Walker. I'm the Outlaw in these parts. I've come to challenge you to a duel. Winner take all."

Oswald laughed even harder. "Is that so? And yet you fought alongside that Sheriff mighty fine. Though, this does account for that impeccable aim of yours. Might I wonder why I'd subject myself to a duel against a Cool-hand like you?"

"My good arm got thrown when one of your men winged my horse back by Old Ma Johnson's Creek. I'd have to shoot with my left."

"And that makes it fair?" He asked, amused.

"It makes it even."

He stood silent for a bit, thinking. Finally, "Okay, Mr. Walker. Let's have us a showdown."

There we stood, in the light of the setting sun. Twenty paces between us. His hand on his belt, my hand on mine. Our guns were in our holsters, un-cocked. One of Oswald's cronies was going to say 'Draw!' and we would have to heft our guns, aim, and fire. Faster man wins.

I stood with my leather brown duster, over my leather hide boots, and worn in jeans. My favorite of shirts was on. I wouldn't want to die wearing anything else.

"Feelin' good today, Walker?" Oswald asked me.

"It's a good day to die, Oswald."

"DRAW!"

We fired.

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It was like watching a mirror. Oswald was fast, and his movements were directly apart from mine. I had a drive behind me, but he had a drive behind him. He moved so swiftly with my left arm as I could with my right, but my aim took longer to set, and that allowed Oswald to fire first.

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His shot clipped my neck, just above the collar bone. My shot took him right between the eyes. A true shot.

Oswald Parker died that day, as the sun settled behind the horizon. His crew disbanded, taking a small amount of the loot, but nothing compared to what was there. The deputies came to my rescue shortly after the duel, they took me to the doc, some took control of the stagecoach and secured it. I was mended and back on my feet in a few days.

The people of that town looked at me as the greatest hero that never lived. I still had the Sheriff's badge when they found me. The whole town had already made the decision for me. I became the new Sheriff of the town. And that's how a dirty outlaw can become a small town hero.

the end

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